Ref. COMM(23)04226

08/09/2023

Open Letter by Christiane Lambert, President of Copa, and Ramon Armengol, President of Cogeca

European agriculture and forestry cannot be left out of the State of the Union address!

In a few days' time, as is now traditional, the President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, will give the last State of the Union address of her office term. This speech is eagerly awaited by all the representatives of agriculture, forestry and, more generally, rural Europe. Not everything can be said in one speech, and it is a tricky matter to sum up all European actions in a few lines. However, with just a few months to go before the elections, we are hoping for a strong message to be sent to the farming community. The repeated absence of any mention of farmers, foresters and agri-cooperatives in this topical address has often disappointed our community and contributed to increasing the distance between Brussels and rural areas.

In the roadmap given to the new Executive Vice-President in charge of the Green Deal, Maroš Šefčovič, we have noted the European Commission's desire to rethink its method by prioritising dialogue and consulting with the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors. Finally!

Our position has always been consistent since the announcement of the Green Deal: we support the final objective of communications like the Farm to Fork strategy, but not a punitive approach that does not talk about concrete solutions, enablers, and financial feasibility! We therefore agree with the initial comments made by Executive Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič when he announced his appointment; the most difficult part of the Green Deal is yet to come, as in the coming months we will be moving from regulatory discussions to implementations on the ground. European policy makers are going to have to move on from words to deeds.

The situation on the ground is complex and needs to be addressed. We have been on the front line throughout the mandate of this Commission, whether it be due to the consequences of Brexit, inflation, energy, since the COVID crisis, issues related to the support of the Ukrainian farming sector, forest fires or the climatic upheavals that are impacting our production harvest after harvest.

We are not passive in the face of these brutal changes. Farmers, foresters, and their cooperatives are on the move, and we're looking for solutions at every level. Solutions that can sometimes be found in a farm building, a group of co-operators or a branch. That's why we need a European Union that steps away from dogmatism and starts talking to rural communities again. Crucial issues are still on the table in this final stretch, whether it is the use of plant protection products, the place of new genomic techniques, animal welfare, the initiative on sustainable food systems or the conclusion of negotiations on the restoration of nature or industrial emissions.

Make no mistake, today we are defining our ability to ensure Europe's food security and its strategic autonomy, while contributing to alleviating global food insecurity and our desire to see a renewal of the generations essential to maintaining our agriculture and rural areas that have confidence and faith in Europe. It is for these reasons that European agriculture and forestry cannot be left out of the State of the Union address!

**-END-**

Translations will be available in DE, ES, FR, IT, PL and RO on the Copa-Cogeca website soon.

About us - Copa and Cogeca are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, we ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, while guaranteeing food security for 500 million people throughout Europe. >>> More information [www.copa-cogeca.eu](http://www.copa-cogeca.eu)

For further information, please contact

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Patrick Pagani  Senior Policy Advisor  patrick.pagani@copa-cogeca.eu | Jean-Baptiste Boucher  Communication Director  +32 474 84 08 36  jean-baptiste.boucher@copa-cogeca.eu |

Press Release Mailing List

**Unsubscribe**

**Subscribe**